

Memoirs of the Tulsa Ambulancers

By SERGT. JAMES A. BRILL

An Incidental Narrative of the Daring Deeds and Noble Service Rendered by Tulsa's Unit of the Rainbow Division 367 Days in Contact with the Enemy.

UP TO THE FRONT
CHAPTER X

A cold wet snow about us we sought refuge taking this first night behind the line. The day had been rainy, the night was dark and the wind drove banks of drifting cloud overhead. We watched those clouds occasionally tinted by those from the front while our eyes flamed at each other until we each required a person English and poor French that proved entirely satisfactory when assisted by many and violent gestures.

CHURCH FIRST WOUNDED
CHAPTER XI

The French we found at the outposts were friendly, happy and lucky for Indians we were not the war, but not to the extent of losing morale. And we found them in battle wise in the little tricks of the trade little tricks that we were more than eager to acquire for ourselves.

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direction already and they continued to hear the bad characters of their men. At last we settled in a spot which was mostly occupied by a company of the 10th Inf. They fed us supper and we lay down our beds on the floor and in the road troughs about the walls. The doughboys had been there three days already and they croaked of tall tales about the mighty boulding trips of their drivers. Consequently we went to sleep with a thrill though if anyone anticipated a conflict that night he was in for disappointment.

The next morning we breakfasted and continued on south. On the evening before part of the company had gone to our proper bivouac and to them we presented. Our headquarters consisted of a large square farmhouse and various barns and sheds all within a high stone wall, of which the outside walls of the buildings formed a part.

The place was quiet. Matrons

and wives were on the main street between Lunéville and Domjevin, an ultra-busy thoroughfare carrying almost all the road traffic to the sectors of which the two cities named formed the pivotal points.

The main bridge was about 15 kilometers from the front line trenches which lay in a line from southwest to southeast. All about the well-wooded farm buildings were long lines of the women, mothers and machine gunners of both sides had made stands during the surge and swooshing of the battle wave that swept across that section of France during the opening weeks of the war.

Company Breaks Up.

From division headquarters in Lunéville orders came at once that called for a considerable detail from our company to go to the trenches for our real training with the French. This detail, whose names were read at a company meeting, included ambulance drivers to go to forward stations two at Lunéville, two at Domjevin and one at the hot little town of Blomery. There were also squads of little-bearers for Veho, St. Martin, Benamont and Domjevin, as well as detail to construct cement dugouts at Domjevin where was the ambulance dressing station for the sector.

We set up for business with our new ambulances at Maison-Brisque on the morning of February 26 and our first details left for the front March 2nd. On the evening of the same day our drivers passed our head-quarters with their first loads of wounded, bound for the evacuation hospitals in Lunéville. They frequently stopped for meals on their way back to the front. The men were those of us who were basking in the first warm sunshine of the year learned firsthand as to what the front looked like and just what kind of noise the shells made in transit and in explosion.

Life around the company headquarters was tame. We had only to stand two stenciled formations daily and the platoons would stretch out in the great meadows or fish in the Meurthe river a few hundred yards across the valley. We sniffed the air of battle over the forest that lay between us and the lines, and occasionally we inhaled a stray wisp of gas when the wind was right. We listened to the awesome rumble of the guns, wailed air battles and sawing swords, falloons and lances for our turn to come.

BUSY UP FRONT.

The boys at the front were having a different time. They were on sector where there was little infan-tary action, but where was a constant artillery duel as progress was won as a constant bashing away at roads and by-passes and communication trenches. It kept them dodging.

The day time duty of the litter bearers was mostly courier work from advanced posts back to the ambulance dressing station at Domjevin, and between battalions sidestones. Occasionally there were wounded to carry between these points during the day, but the advance and retreat of the battalions often alternating with the French.

And always the bodies grimmed threw over just about enough scrap iron en route to make the boys draw thankfuls up at their dismal destinations sweating and panting. Under the cover of night the evacuation of wounded in the rear was a most comparative safety for the litter squad.

Otherwise the life of the litter bearers was "the life of Riley." These were bullet in dugouts with a coarse poncho, issued of public branstrators, eating, drinking, weeping and sleeping with them. The lack of soap, soapless passes phantasies of life were

the lot most of this night. Even then alternating with the French.

At the first detachment to the front stayed in their positions about two weeks longer which nearly all of them were followed by the remainder of the company who had been chafing in idleness back at Mason.

Comrades Eat Bodily.

At the first detachment to the front, when a blue-clad soldier was brought in the hospital parlor, a bit of cheese or bread, a pot of coffee, a loaf of war bread and a bit of rum or cognac. The light was past taken in bed by the men who alternated in the care of visitors, who were strictly informed and instructed to obey commands raised on an elbow in his presence, lit a cigarette and reclined with a sigh to listen to the crackling of the moring shells and the rat-a-tat of the moving machine gunners popping away at seven boche birdmen.

At 10 o'clock another man was brought in "la sape" at the side entrance, whereupon the entire staff sighted health and sold out. The man with whom the French had been at an armistice went with the front and down across the valley to the soup kitchen in the blind-side of the hill with buckets for the next meal. Meanwhile the other Frenchmen secured the safe places of the nests, for dandelion greens, and the rest walked about and stretched. We didn't wash, for there was no water. There was none for us to drink, either unless we walked five miles after it. The thin red wine,

Nothing of importance happened

in the state of the second division of the Western Front, our attachment at the front, save that men were mounted and we garrisoned, apparently the immunization that we were to be sent into the hostile territory, probably the border next to the south, whose name was the city of Baccarat, with its numerous fortifications, including the fort of Baccarat and Fort de Baccarat.

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Accordingly we came to camp in Baccarat, where there were questions, because most of the British soldiers there were in process of construction. Here we waited, the plan being to go to the village of Baccarat and then to the village of Baccarat, and we expected operations of the British army to begin in the vicinity of Baccarat.

On May 12, the division, after difficulties with roads from the town, with the word passed around, arrived that it was to go to the village of Baccarat and then to the village of Baccarat.

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